



JANET NAPOLITANO
GOVERNOR

JOEY STRICKLAND
DIRECTOR

STATE OF ARIZONA
ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES
3839 NORTH THIRD STREET, SUITE 200
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85012
PHONE (602) 255-3373 FAX (602) 255-1038

NEWS ADVISORY

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State Officials Meet to Form Compact Addressing Education Needs of Military Children

(PHOENIX) – Arizona Department of Veterans' Services Director Joey Strickland joined representatives from 11 states in Phoenix to establish operating guidelines and bylaws for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, an interstate agreement that addresses common problems affecting military students due to frequent moves and deployments.

The average military student faces transition challenges more than twice during high school, and most military children will attend six to nine different school systems from kindergarten to 12th grade. Those challenges include transfer of school records, graduation requirements, extracurricular activities, entrance and exit testing, kindergarten and first grade entrance requirements and the power of custodial parents while parents are deployed.

The new compact commission deals with these issues, as well as compact enforcement, administration, finances, communications, data sharing and training.

The compact, developed by The Council of State Governments (CSG) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense, was enacted by 11 states this year. Those states are Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina and Oklahoma. States signing the compact agree to work collectively with other compact states to create uniform standards of practice in dealing with issues facing military children.

The commission elected Cheryl Walker, superintendent of Fountain-Fort Carson School District in Colorado, as chairperson; Director Joey Strickland, as vice chair; and Brad Neuenswander, director of school finance with the Kansas Department of Education, as treasurer. Members also formed the executive and rules committees.

The Arizona State Legislature approved the compact and it was signed by Governor Janet Napolitano in April of this year.